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### Mellon foundation contributes \$150,000 for endowed chair

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Jan. 10, 2001

**Contact:** Forestry Professor Dan Pletscher, (406) 243-6364, or biology Professor Don Christian, 243-5122.

### **MELLON FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTES \$150,000 FOR ENDOWED CHAIR**

#### **MISSOULA-**

The John J. Craighead Chair in Wildlife Biology at The University of Montana is well on its way to becoming a reality, thanks to a \$150,000 gift from the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

The grant from the Pittsburgh-based foundation is a substantial start toward the \$2.5 million needed to endow the Craighead Chair. When fully funded, the chair will allow the University to hire a wildlife biologist to continue the tradition of the accomplished professor's leadership in wildlife research at UM.

Having a researcher to follow in Craighead's footsteps, said UM President George Dennison, will allow UM to continue to attract outstanding students and faculty members.

"Dr. Craighead's work helped to put The University of Montana on the map in terms of scientific discovery," Dennison said. "With our proximity to national and state parks, forests and refuges, the University is located in one of the nation's finest laboratories for wildlife research. Location, combined with the distinguished educators and scientists of our faculty, has positioned us at the forefront of wildlife and environmental study."

Craighead's pioneering studies of grizzly bears, raptor biology, satellite tracking

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technology and remote-sensing techniques earned him an international reputation, as well as recognition by scientific organizations such as the National Geographic Society, the Wildlife Society and the Society for Conservation Biology. His 25-year association with UM helped establish the University's wildlife biology program as one of the most distinguished in the United States.

The Craighead Chair within the Division of Biological Sciences will recognize his lifetime achievements and strengthen the wildlife biology program by providing a senior faculty member and new educational opportunities. The Craighead professor will study large mammals in large ecosystems.

UM's wildlife biology program is a unique, interdisciplinary program with faculty from the School of Forestry, Division of Biological Sciences and Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit working together to integrate basic and applied wildlife ecology, resource management and conservation. There are approximately 300 undergraduate and graduate students studying wildlife biology at UM.

UM hopes to complete funding for the Craighead Chair by early 2002.

"The Mellon grant gives our fund-raising efforts a tremendous boost by demonstrating the national – even international – significance of wildlife biology at The University of Montana," Dennison said. "We believe that other research-oriented foundations and corporations, as well as individuals interested in the interaction between wild and domestic animals and human activities, will partner with Mellon to help us fund the chair."

The Mellon Foundation was created in 1947 by Richard King Mellon, who had a distinguished career in the military and in the financial, industrial and civic life of his



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community. He served as president of Mellon National Bank and for 20 years was chair of its board. The foundation's focus is quality of life in Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania, in addition to natural resource conservation on a national level.

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